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## Suggestion of everyday asbestos exposure in U.S. life labeled untrue

To the Editor:

One of the obstacles here in California to government moving new people onto exposed surface tremolite deposits is the sticky little fact that these people will inevitably find out. To battle these people's ability to understand that they have been deceived and their lives have been put at risk by the government, the EPA and ATSDR as well as state health organizations such as the California Air Resources Board, have developed a great many deceptions to mollify these people.

One of those deceptions has recently been used in Libby for similar purposes.

On Nov. 10, 2004, at the public CAG meeting, Jim Christiansen of EPA told new residents to the town of Troy, who had become concerned after they had discovered that they are being put at risk, that "asbestos is ubiquitous." Also that "everybody is exposed to asbestos at some point in their lives." This could not have been said better if Jim Christiansen worked directly for W.R. Grace, Owens Corning, Johns Manville or Haliburton. (What am I saying? Jim Christiansen does work indirectly for these corporations - perhaps even unbeknownst to him. Silly me).

Anyway, 90 percent plus of the

world's "asbestos" is chrysotile asbestos. Only a little over 1 percent of all "asbestos" is tremolite. Even still, everybody is not exposed to even chrysotile in their lives. You may wish to check with "real scientists" who have actually studied and looked at lung samples from around our country, rather than EPA or ATSDR skills. These facts are part of the scientific literature and have been for a long time. Not only is "asbestos" not ubiquitous, but the most deadly form by far - long fiber asbestiform tremolite - isn't even close to being common.

I don't know how stupid these people think we all are, but even

the very dumbest of us must wonder why then are people dying at extreme rates in Libby and not in Washington, D.C.? Or Cripple Creek, Colo., or Dallas, Texas? The answer is of course that the people of Libby are exposed to tremolite and that is not going to end any time soon. That makes all the difference in the world.

Incidentally, the same argument Jim Christiansen tried with the people of Troy was attempted publicly here in California by a government toxicologist recently. That toxicologist was embarrassed nearly off the stage when he was asked for his scientific references that show "everybody is exposed

to asbestos." He of course could not produce references because they don't exist. The opposite references exist most readily. Similar arguments by EPA officials have met with booing from the audience. It wasn't true here in California and it isn't true in Libby.

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